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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: EKA BESELIA CLAIMS SON'S ARREST IS POLITICALLY
MOTIVATED

REF: TBILISI 925

1. (SBU) Summary: Eka Beselia, member of the Joint Opposition, activist and well-known defense lawyer, alleged her son's recent arrest is politically motivated and is the latest step by the GOG to repress members of the opposition. Beselia's son, Rati Milorava (age 15 or 16) is facing two to five years imprisonment for the crime of "hooliganism," a crime in which Beselia says her son was only a witness. Poloffs met with Beselia at her request and subsequently discussed the case with the Prosecutor General's Office numerous times. We are unable at this point to discern the truth because the story varies between each side. No court date has been set and Milorava is currently out of jail after posting bail of 2000 GEL (about 1,408 USD). End Summary.

2. (SBU) In a June 28 meeting, Beselia told Poloff that her 15-year old son, Rati Milorava, was issued a summons to appear before the Prosecutor's Office on June 30 as a witness to an incident which occurred four months ago. Beselia said that an insider at the Prosecutor's office, whom she refused to identify, confided to her that her son would be arrested for "hooliganism" when he appeared and his arrest was retribution for her political activism. Kakha Kukava, of the Joint Opposition also attended, and said that he had contacted the OSCE and NDI to ask for their help. Kukava asserted that Milorava's arrest was the latest step of the GOG to repress members of the opposition for their activism, and that it was spreading now to affect their families. On July 1 Milorava was arrested, and on July 2 the Tbilisi City court heard the case. The Prosecutor General's Office gave Post a copy of the police report and the series of events are inconsistent with Beselia's and Kukava's story.

3. (SBU) Poloffs met with Beselia on 16 July and were presented with evidence suggesting the Prosecutor's Office altered Milorava's participation in the events only after Beselia threatened to revoke her participation in the 21 May parliamentary election. According to Beselia, Milorava was considered a witness in an altercation between a friend and a security guard after another friend attempted to steal candy, but the charges were allegedly trumped up to include Milorava in "hooliganism" (which carries a maximum penalty of 2-5 years in prison) immediately preceding the parliamentary elections as a tool to stop Beselia's participation. Beselia acknowledged her son was present during the incident but told Poloffs that she will not halt her political activism because her son is innocent. She said she will fight to remove these charges. In addition, Beselia claims she has filed for her son's political asylum with the French Embassy.

4. (SBU) Poloffs subsequently discussed Beselia's accusations several times with the Prosecutor General's Office, most recently on July 22, but were unable to determine precisely why Milorava's charges were altered. According to the Prosecutor General's Office, the MOIA is still investigating

the case, and a trial date is still pending.

15. (SBU) Comments: The truth likely lies somewhere between the two sides' stories. It appears that Milorava was present and involved in an altercation. However, the Prosecutor's Office has not charged the youth who instigated the confrontation by stealing candy and says it has no plans to do so due to the resources required to prosecute the theft of such an insignificant sum (1 USD). End Comment.

TEFFT